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## THE PROCESS OF BECOMING MULTILINGUAL: INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGE BIOGRAPHIES OF POLES IN BUKOVINA

### Abstract

This article focuses on multilingual female speakers born in Bukovina in the 1920s using the language biography method. Analysing selected language biographies of Poles living in southern and northern Bukovina entails focusing on a heritage language. The language biography method shows the development process of individual language awareness. The cases analysed in the study indicate that it is difficult to preserve the linguistic and cultural identity of an individual in mixed-language marriages. For Bukovinian Poles, the Polish language and the Roman Catholic religion are factors of identification and indigenous values symbolizing their belonging to the culture of their ancestors. These two elements are at the core of their identity and are fundamental cultural values which are passed on to children. All the language biographies presented in the article show the speakers' multilingualism and the way and time in which they learned subsequent languages. Their acquisition was voluntary on the one hand, but imposed on the other.

**Keywords:** language biography; heritage language; individual multilingualism; Polish language outside Poland; language awareness

## 1 The concept of language biography

The subject of the research presented in this article is the multilingualism<sup>1</sup> of Poles born in Bukovina in the 1920s. The study relies on the language biography method, “a research method that is becoming more and more widely used not only in research in the field of language contacts and bilingualism, but also in speech therapy, description and *analysis of the Polish language of individual users outside our country*, or in the study of the process of developing individual language awareness” (Miodunka, 2016, p. 49; emphasis added). A language biography is to be treated as a collection of facts from a particular person's life related to the ways and conditions of language acquisition, to the use of the language in various settings, and possibly to forgetting the

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<sup>1</sup>Multilingualism is to be understood as the everyday use of two or more different languages by a given social group; the alternate use of two or more languages by an individual allows them to be defined as bilingual or multilingual.

language. Language biographies are varied: some individuals acquire a language during courses while learning at school, which is a conscious acquisition, while other language biographies involve unconscious and unintentional but voluntary acquisition (e.g. while playing with children speaking (an)other language(s)).

Language biography is used as a research method in various humanities subjects and social sciences. Issues pertaining to language biographies have been the subject of research, among others, by Anne Betten and Miryam Du-nour (Betten & Du-nour, 1995), Klaus Brake (Brake, 1998), Ruthellen B. Josselson and Amia Lieblich (Josselson & Lieblich, 1999), Aneta Pavlenko and Adrian Blackledge (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2003), Ekaterina Protasova (Protasova, 2004), Katerina Meng and Ekaterina Protasova (Meng & Protasova, 2007, pp. 407–408).

The language biography method has also been used by Polish researchers. Considering the Polish literature on the subject of language biographies, it is worth noting the works of Michał Głuszkowski (2011), Władysław Miodunka (2016) and Tadeusz Lewaszkiewicz (2017). Władysław Miodunka, discussing individual academic papers, writes that “a typical language biography should contain two parts, both the narrative, which tells us about life facts and interprets them, and the analytical part, which shows excerpts of oral and written statements and analyses interferences that can be noticed in them, as well as the phenomenon of code switching” (Miodunka, 2016, p. 81).

Language biography is important at every stage of human development; it is unique for every person living in a given multilingual environment. In their personal and social development, individuals shape and enrich their language, often as a result of adopting a different culture. “The language development of an individual takes place in two dimensions — individual and social, with both types of development being closely related” (Głuszkowski, 2011, p. 125). Michał Głuszkowski describes the sociological and psychological conditions of the bilingualism of the Old Believers in the Suwałki–Augustów region and concludes that “idiolects of representatives of the older generation are less diverse than in the case of younger Old Believers, primarily due to the relatively uniform system of non-linguistic factors shaping their bilingualism” (Głuszkowski, 2011, p. 244). In his analysis, Głuszkowski identifies the most important phases of language biography as follows:

1. the language spoken at home during the preschool period;
2. the language spoken during contact with neighbours;
3. the language of the family home in childhood;
4. the language spoken during school days and adolescence;
5. the language spoken at home during adulthood/married life and the language spoken in the workplace.

Each period refers to the situation of one or more codes (Głuszkowski, 2011, p. 127). When analysing the language biography of a given speaker, Głuszkowski considers the specificity of a given group and the type of language contacts.

Władysław Miodunka, in turn, discusses in detail the works on the role of language biographies in the study of Polish-foreign bilingualism. He notes the imperfections of this method, but also its advantages (Miodunka, 2016, pp. 63–84).

The language biographies of Poles who have lived on the Ukrainian–Romanian border for more than two centuries have not yet been the subject of research or analysis. The book *Świadectwo zanikającego dziedzictwa. Mowa polska na Bukowinie: Rumunia–Ukraina* [A Testimony to a Vanishing Heritage. The Polish Language of Bukovina: Romania–Ukraine] presents a classification of the Polish dialects of Bukovina, their grammatical characteristics, and examples of the influence of Slovak, Romanian and Ukrainian (Krasowska et al., 2018). The volume outlines the geographical extent and classification of Polish dialects in Bukovina, the first time this has been done since Poles settled there in the nineteenth century. However, it does not discuss particular language biographies.

## 2 The concept of heritage language

When analysing selected language biographies of Poles in southern and northern Bukovina, one is studying a so-called heritage language, a relatively new term derived from the work of American scholars (cf. Valdés, 1995). Maria Polinsky and Olga Kagan apply the term heritage language to describe the native language of immigrants used in the home environment: they acquire it as a first language but have a limited scope of competence; in contrast, they achieve full competence in their second language, i.e. the language of the country of settlement (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007, p. 368). Polinsky notes that although users of an inherited language foster a cultural and family relationship with their heritage, they usually do not achieve full competence in the chronologically first language (Polinsky, 2015, p. 7).

Ewa Lipińska and Anna Seretny, who introduced this term to Polish scholarship, write as follows:

In the Polish nomenclature, the closest equivalent of *heritage language* is *język domowy* (home language), i.e. spoken and narrowed to topics related to everyday life, family life, a variation of the *ethnic language* that is currently used or was used in the past by members of a community as their mother tongue. This concept, however, does not fully reflect the historical, cultural and emotional depth inherent in the word *heritage* (heritage, tradition, identity), which is why the name *język odziedziczony* (literally: *inherited language*, in the sense: descendant, successive) seems to be more adequate, as it combines family values and the richness of national heritage. (Lipińska & Seretny, 2012, p. 21)<sup>2</sup>

Lipińska and Seretny note that the term heritage language — with reference to the code used at home and in contacts with loved ones, in an environment in which the official code is a different communication system — gained popularity in the twenty-first century, especially in the United States (Lipińska & Seretny, 2013, p. 2). Writing about Polish, they observe that as a heritage language it is evolving, “as it is taught in Polish schools [abroad] and they strive to ensure that it does not differ from the standard variation of Polish” (Lipińska & Seretny, 2013, p. 3). Another observation they make about the use of the term heritage language is important in view of the topic of this study: “For Poles living abroad, language is a factor of identification and an indigenous value symbolizing their belonging to the culture of their ancestors. It plays an integrating role as one of the basic elements of the characteristics of a given ethnic group and one of the fundamental values of culture that parents should pass on to children” (Lipińska & Seretny, 2013, p. 3).

A heritage language is assimilated naturally through the auditory-oral route. It satisfies basic communication needs in the family sphere, neighbourly contact, and in the sphere of religion; sometimes it is improved at school. According to Lipińska and Seretny, “it also constitutes an important link in communication with the country and national heritage and defines the identity of its users” (Lipińska & Seretny, 2011). In the case of research conducted among Poles in Bukovina, the lexeme *dziedzictwo* (heritage) clearly reflects the historical, cultural, and especially the emotional and identity connotations that are connected with the ancestral country of our speakers. Bukovinian Poles, who inherited the Polish language from their ancestors, pass it on to future generations in a variety of ways. This is associated with an emotional approach to the language, as well as with identity and religion. A strong sense of being Polish is the main reason for striving to preserve the Polish language, especially in the sphere of prayer and home conversations. In the language biographies presented below, Polish speech developed in isolation from the main body of the Polish language and was surrounded by various Slavic and non-Slavic languages.

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<sup>2</sup> Anna Żurek, describing the communication strategies of bilinguals based on the example of the Polish language inherited in Germany, points out: “Currently, the issue of heritage language (including Polish) is gaining popularity. In the Polish literature on the subject, the term Polish as an inherited language (heritage language) is still not widely used and clearly defined. In this study, it is understood as ‘the language of the country of origin of bilingual representatives of the Polish community, i.e. the first, second and third generation raised in a non-Polish cultural circle’” (Żurek, 2018, p. 12).

### 3 Language biographies

The language biography method shows the development process of individual language awareness. The language material for the present study was obtained through interviews conducted several times, participant observation (in the family, at work, at home, in the parish, at meetings of the local community) and the analysis of e-mail documentation and records of respondents. Thus, in order to ensure the objectivity of the results, the study applies triangulation, a strategy whereby more than one technique is used to obtain data on the same speaker (cf. Miodunka, 2016, p. 83). The research was conducted in the years 2015–2020. Material was collected from 30 people (22 women and 8 men) over the age of 60 at the time of the first interview. The language biographies of 3 women (2 residing in northern Bukovina (Ukraine) and 1 residing in southern Bukovina (Romania)) were selected for presentation in this article.

The language biographies of the interviewees presented below are divided into the following age periods: childhood, school age, further/higher education, work and adult life, retirement and the present day. The material used in the article comes from interviews and utterances spoken in unofficial situations, e.g. in personal meetings, in meetings with other speakers, accompanied by participant observation. Before presenting each biography, a brief introduction about the speaker is provided. Each period described by the speaker in authentic language (in semi-orthographic transcription) is followed by comments. Questions from the researcher are quoted in italic; the speakers are referred to using their initials.

#### 3.1 The language biography of LN

LN was born to a Polish family in the village of Davydivka (Rom. Davideni), then in Romania, in 1925. Both her parents were Polish, so the home language was Polish. She attended Romanian and Polish schools. As a child, she attended a Polish church, where Mass was said only in Polish; the language of her private prayer was Polish. Her family, with whom she spoke Polish, also lived in Davydivka. The language of everyday conversation was Polish with the Poles, but she also used Romanian and Ukrainian because the village was multi-ethnic. After getting married, she moved to the village of Komarivtsi, where there was no Catholic church or Polish neighbours. The only Polish speaker LN had contact with was her sister-in-law, who lived nearby. As of March 2020, they were the only Polish speakers in the village. After LN got married her home language was Ukrainian: she spoke it to her husband and children. Polish still remained the language of private prayer; she taught her children and grandchildren to pray in Polish. LN was able to read and write in Romanian, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian. Her language can be classified as Bukovinian Polish, which is a continuation of the Polish of south-eastern Kresy with phonetic elements of the dialect of Bukovinian highlanders. LN died in March 2020.

#### CHILDHOOD 1925–1932

**Official language: Romanian**

**Home language: Polish**

Moi rodzice oni z Polski pochodzom wszystkie. A moja matka przy Austrii. Ona tutaj przyjechała, bo to było nieszczęście, to była wojna, i oni tutaj się pożenili z ojcem i my tutaj się, dzieci wszystkie rodzili my tutaj i w domu po polsku wszystko.

*But you speak Polish very well. Is it from home or school?*

Z domu, moja matka mówiła, my po polsku, my po polsku mówili w domu. Literatury, literaturny, my nie rozmawiamy tak literaturno po polsku, bo tak, tak rodzice rozmawiali. a už teraz w Polsce tak że inaczej, literaturno rozmawiajom.

**Language of prayer**

Tak to było tylko po polsku, te „Ojcie Nasz” i te wszystkie co w domu mama nas uczyła po polsku. Babcia Barbara też po polsku moliliś. Tak dawno to byli prawdziwi Polaki.

**Explication**

As a child, the speaker grew up in a Polish family; her first language was Polish, both in everyday life and during prayer. Due to social circumstances, her mother knew German as it was the official language before 1918 in Bukovina. They spoke to their neighbors in their languages, i.e. Polish, Romanian and Ukrainian. Her grandmother made sure that the Polish language and Polishness were present at all times. The speaker is aware that the language spoken at home was not literary Polish.

**SCHOOL AGE 1933–1942**

**Official language: Romanian, Russian**

**Home language: Polish**

**School language**

*Didn't you attend a Polish school?*

Chodziła do szkoły polskiej, nie było u nas szkoły polskiej Szkoła rumuńska i tam było po polsku. W Dawidenach był Polski Dom. Był Polski Dom tam, była tam szkoła. Mielśmy uczitelkę, Polka była. Lisiecka, Maria Lisiecka uczyicielka. Maria Lisiecka ona nas tak dużo nauczyła wszystkiego: piosenek dużo, wszystkiego pouczyła nas i sie z bratem moim przepisywała sie. Ja pani mówię, że tam był Polski Dom, to była rumuńska szkoła i polska szkoła. Dwa razy na tydzień była polska. Polska. A ksiondz tylko w sobote przychodził.

**Language of religion**

Ja przypomne zaraz na religie ksiondz przychodził też do szkoły. Nazywa sie ksiondz Zontek. Zontek. A i byli, przyszedł jeden Niemiec. Młody. Tak że przychodzi do Dawidenów to jemu Zontak napisał po polsku wszystko. Po niemiecku on, po polsku czytał ludziom i spowiadał. Ludzie po polsku, ale on swoje niemieckie wszystko. Tak sie te Niemcy rozciągali strasznie u nas w Baniłowie, że po wioskach, oni takie specjaliści straszne. Te Niemcy, oni jak coś panie zrobili — rzecz, mebel, to to było robota. Czterdziestego roku powiedzieli, aby sie zabierali Niemcy do niemieckiej. Znajcie czterdziestego roku pojechali Niemcy. Nasze Polaki zbierajom sie czterdziestego, czterdziestego i piontego. Wyjeżdżają. Dużo z Dawidenów przyjeżdżali, tak o to wolno było, to tylko do pani Markulaczki. O tam najesia, tam wyśpijsia, tam bude wsio. Tylko do niej, bo nie było do kogo. Bo mieszkania nie było. Niczego nie było. Wszystko. Kołchoz zabrał wszystko.

**Explication**

The speaker attended a Romanian school where Polish was taught. At school she learned both Romanian and Polish. In the church the language of prayer was also German as the serving priest from Banyliv was German; he said Mass in German and in Polish, alternating the language every Sunday. It was the time of political changes, the eve of World War II, and the official language was about to change.

## **EDUCATION AND WORK 1943–1950, MARRIAGE (1948) AND FURTHER YEARS OF WORK**

**Official language: Russian, Ukrainian**

### **Language of further education and environment**

To kto sie dobrze uczył, jaka by to nie była literatura, to tych dzieci brali, dalej Rosjanie brali. Nas: mnie i mego brata i jeszcze dwoje z Dawiden, one som w Polsce, jedna umarła jedna jeszcze żyje. Nas posłali do Czerniowiec, pedahohiczne uczyliście tak sie nazywa. My tam przyuczyli sie dwa roki, nas byli. My nie mogli zakończyć, bo brat bardzo chorował i nas takich młodych uczniów takich specjalistyw młodych, i nas wygnali na roboty, i my pracowali. O. Pracowali my, a później my już kończyli, jak to sie mówi, zaoczno. Tak. My kończali to. Pani wi, bo pani tutaj wie, jak to było. No, to już je. Ja pracowałam dziesięć lat w szkole, a później my sie z menżem poženili (1948).

Dwanaście lat, panie kochany, ja przetargowałam w swojej chacie, i dzieci byli w porzondku, i monż nie był głodny, i ja nie była głodna, i gospodarke trzymaliśmy, i było dobrze. No i tak wyszłam na pensje później. Dostaje pensje, bo ja uczestnik wojny. Temu, że uczyłam sie we wojne, i pracowała we wojne.

### **Explication**

The speaker continued her education in Chernivtsi in Russian and Ukrainian. The language of the environment was Russian, and at home she spoke Ukrainian to her husband and children. Polish remained the language of prayer and contact with the immediate family and one neighbour. After getting married, the speaker moved from Davydivka, where many Poles lived, to Komarivtsi, where she had only one Polish neighbour. It is worth noting that most Poles left Davydivka for Poland in 1945–1946, where they settled in the Lubusz region and Lower Silesia.

## **ADULT LIFE 1951–1985**

**Official language: Russian, Ukrainian**

### **Language of marriage**

Mój starszy syn narodił sie, nazywa sie Ewgien, Nijaku Ewgien, piadziestego pierwszego roku sie narodził nam. Krzczony. U ksiedza Krajewskiego. My chodzili do kościoła. My! Jakie my byli komsomolce, pani nie wie. My do kościoła chodzili. Druga moja córka, drugie dziecko moje, Wilhelmina, Wilhelmina, piadziestego piontego roku, trzecie dziecko moje, Ludmiła — sześdziesiontego roku. Dzieci moje krzczone wszystkie i wszystkie one ślubione. A w domu po ukraińsku już było zawsze. Wszystkie ślub brali, wesele robili. Miał osiemnaście lat, jego przyzwali do armi.

### **Explication**

Communist times also brought about a change in language. Polish schools were closed; Romanian schools were replaced with Russian and Ukrainian ones. After marrying, she moved to another village in which only one neighbour was Polish. The rest of the community were Ukrainians or Romanians speaking the local dialect of Ukrainian, which was used on a daily basis. LN spoke Ukrainian to her husband and children. Sometimes she also spoke Romanian to her husband (e.g. on private matters which they did not wish to reveal to their children).

**RETIREMENT AND OLD AGE 1981–2020****Official language: Russian, Ukrainian****Home language: Ukrainian****Language of religion**

On przystał. On sam prawosławny, ale on przysed na polskie i tak sobie do kościoła każdej niedzieli chodzą i tak ładnie się modlą. Czemu, pani kochana, czemu my nie mamy, ni jakiego prawa nie mamy. Ot ja każdy niedzieli ja do kościoła nie ide. Bratowa chodzi, ja nie może iść. Ja polska baradajko z Rumunii, z tego, z Jasów. Tak to się nazywie Jasy. Je katolicka msza święta, ale po rumuńsku wim i ja każdy dzień słucham te msze święte. Tak. A czemu my po radiu nie możemy, nichto nie może nam pomóc, aby my po radiu też mogli msze posłuchać z Polski. My możemy. Niech pani zapisze to gdzieś, że proszą Polaki w Storożyni, aby była, aby było puszczone w radiu, w telebaczyniu, w tiliwizji, polski jenzyk! Aby był! My pragniemy tego! My jesteśmy Polacy! Aby nam ktoś mógł pomóc. Aby nam dali polskich księdzów.

**Language of the environment**

Czemu my nie możemy mieć swojego!? Toż to my za Rumunie mieli swoje szkoły polskie, mieli uczytela, mieli my ksiondzów. Czego my nie możemy w tej dzirżawie niczego mieć swoje. My nie narzekamy, że niedobra dzierżawa. My dzierżawę lubimy, szanujemy, bo my musimy, bo my żyjemy u niej. Ale my chcemy swojego prawa mieć, swojego porzondku. To już się nie wróci panie kochana, to już będzie gorzej jeszcze, ale ja już nie chcę to widzieć.

Mam dużo literatury polskiej, czytam, to się człowiek, ale to już pani wie, tak o nacytam się, nacytam się, oczy boliom, oczy boliom w głowie się krenci, cis dostane. I tak staram się, aby tak czytać, muszę, bo mam ksionżeczki tej, tam modlitwy rozmaite som, modlimy się tej, ale wiele pan Bóg pomoże, tyle bendzie życia mego.

**Knowledge of different languages and their value**

I tak że ja po rumuńsku mogę czytać, pisać, po polsku mogę czytać, pisać, bo ja literature mam. Po rosyjsku, po ukraińsku też może. Tak że, ale to. Nieraz mnie dziewczęta kłóco: „Mamo teraz taki czas, że trza wiedzieć i po rumuńsku, ty czemu nas nie uczyłaś? Ty tylko mówiłaś z tatam pare słów po rumuńsku, aby my nie rozumieli. No. A teraz byłoby nam lepij”. Przychodzi, moja córka pracuje na operacji — operacyjna siostra. Przychodzi na operację człowiek, oni go nie rozumiom. Romanieście, grajeście! A ona mówi: „A ja siem patrzem na niego. Jakby ty była, jakby mama nauczyła, ja byłaby pomogła komuś”. E, co zrobimy.

**Explication**

Since 1990, there have again been changes in the official language, as well as access to the church. The speaker talks emotionally about introducing Ukrainian as the language of liturgy, although she does not actively participate in religious services due to her age. She listens to Mass in Romanian and would very much like to be able to listen to it and pray in Polish. She speaks Polish and Ukrainian with her daughters and grandchildren. She speaks and reads Romanian to this day. The daughters blame her for not teaching them Romanian.

The speaker is a representative of the oldest generation of Bukovinian Poles. She has a rich language biography, which was influenced by socio-political events, changes of state borders and official languages: Romanian, Russian and Ukrainian. Her rich language biography was also influenced by her place of birth, where she mastered these languages while playing with Ukrainian- and Romanian-speaking children. Polish was her home language, the first one which she inherited from her grandparents and parents. She is very attached to it: she treats it as her own language because she feels Polish. This strong attachment is clearly apparent in her comments on the replacement of Polish in religious services. The influence of Russian and Ukrainian is visible in comments referring

to events after 1950, which include words from these languages. Analysing the lexicon used by LN, we can see loan words from Russian, Ukrainian and Romanian.

We can see Russian: *august* ‘sierpień’, Rus. *avgust* (August); *pozdrawiać* ‘składać życzenia’, Rus. *pozdravliat’* (to give sb wishes); *przepisowała się* ‘korespondowała z kimś’, Rus. *perepisivatsia* (to correspond with sb); *pedagogiczne училище* ‘szkoła pedagogiczna’, Rus. *pedagogicheskoe uchilishche* (teachers’ college); *charosza* ‘dobra’, Rus. *khoroshaia* (good, fem.); *poście* ‘po’, Rus. *posle* (after); *użasna* ‘straszna’, Rus. *uzhasnaia* (terrible, fem.); *przyzwali do armii* ‘wezwal do wojska’, Rus. *prizvali v armiiu* (to get called up to the army); uczitelkę ‘nauczycielkę’, contamination of Ukrainian with Russian, cf. Ukr. *vchytel’ka*, Rus. *uchitel’nitsa* (female teacher). In the sentence *Pozdrawiali mnie wszyscy, ładnie było* she uses the word *pozdrawiali* (Polish: they sent their regards) in the meaning *składali życzenia* (they gave me their wishes), Rus. *pozdraviali*.

From Ukrainian: *zał* ‘sala’, Ukr. *zal* (large room); *literaturny, literaturno* ‘literacki’, Ukr. *literaturna mova* (literary language); *moliliś* ‘modlili się’, Ukr. *molylys’* (they prayed); *wińsiaty się* ‘brać ślub kościelny’, Ukr. *vinchatysia* (to have a church wedding); *motoda* ‘panna młoda’, Ukr. *moloda* (bride); *dzierżawa* ‘państwo’, Ukr. *derzhava* (state, country); *ticheńko* ‘cichutko’, Ukr. *tykhen’ko* (very quietly); *nichto* ‘nikt’, Ukr. *nikhto* (nobody); *batkowie* ‘świadkowie weselni’, Ukr. *bat’ky* (wedding witnesses); *interesno* ‘ciekawie’, Ukr. *interesno* (interesting); *pohana, fem.* ‘zła’, Ukr. *pohana* (bad, fem.); *balakajom* ‘rozmawiają’, Ukr. *balakaiut’* (they talk, say); *pałatki* ‘namioty’, Ukr. *palatky* (tents). In the utterances of LN one can observe code switching between Polish and Ukrainian, and Polish and Romanian, involving words, idioms and even entire sentences in the narrative. The speaker uses code switching consciously and repeatedly; e.g. with Ukrainian: *A ten hołowa mówi: „Majte dwoje dityj. Uczytsia. A cej dwoje w swecie, w Sybirii deś. Ne jidty”. Mama posłuchała, myśli: „Może będzie dobrze”. To nie było dobre.* Another example is switching between Polish and Romanian: *Przychodzi na operacje człowiek, oni go nie rozumiom. Romanieście, grajeście!*, from Romanian *grăiește* ‘mówić’ (to speak).

The speaker uses code switching when she quotes a third party and she wants to present the exact statement of that person. In the narrative about the wedding, LN also uses the lexeme *karuca*, which comes from the Romanian *caruță* meaning ‘cart’. She uses this word on purpose, since she describes a situation about which she indicates that everyone in the village rode a *karuca* to the wedding at the time.

The linguistic repertoire of the 94-year-old speaker is rich; her narrative includes references to the social and historical-political situation related to changes of borders and official languages. The speaker talked very emotionally about events from her life and her language experiences. The first conversation lasted over three hours; the visit of a person from Poland was a great emotional experience: “because I have no one to speak Polish to”. An equally emotional request concerned the possibility of listening to Mass in Polish and the availability of the Bible in Polish. Polish plays a symbolic and identifying role in the narrative in question. The speaker kept the Polish language inherited from her parents and grandparents throughout her entire life; she also passed it on to her children and grandchildren: all of them have learned it from her and use it in various situations (e.g. in private prayer).

### 3.2 The language biography of LB

LB was born in 1927 in a Polish–German family in Păltinoasa, Romania. Polish and German were her home languages: her mother spoke Polish, her father spoke German. The village had a large German community until 1940, and Poles lived there until 1945. LB learned Romanian at school. She married a Pole and their home language was the Polish dialect of Bukovinian highlanders. After Germans and Poles left Bukovina, Romanian, as the official language, prevailed in the sphere of neighbourly relations. Currently, the main language of family communication is Romanian.



**CHILDHOOD 1927–1933****Official language: Romanian****Home language**

Mój ojciec był Niemiec, mamka Polka. Mój ojciec i pisał po niemiecku i mówił, wszystko. Tak było wtenczas. Do szkoły po niemiecku ojciec. Były Niemcy tutaj. Tutaj było bardzo dużo Niemców, a teraz nie ma ani jednego. W domu po polsku i po niemiecku. Mamka po polsku, ojciec po niemiecku.

**Language of the church, religion**

Po polsku. Bardzo dobrze. Kolendy, wszystko po polsku. I rodzice jak żyją, wszystko po polsku. Wszystko po polsku. I kolendy. Wszystko po polsku. Ale, bo na święta to Boże Narodzenie szli po kolindzie i wszystko po polsku.

**Explication**

The speaker was born to a Polish–German family in Păltinoasa. Her father spoke German, her mother spoke Polish. Her paternal grandmother was also Polish and spoke Polish. Polish was also the language of private prayer and the language of celebrating annual and family rituals. In church, German prevailed as the language of liturgy and Polish was used in private prayer. The language used during play with other children was German, as there were many Germans living in Păltinoasa before 1940.

**SCHOOL AGE 1934–1944****Official language: Romanian****Home language and language of the environment**

Mama była Polka! To w domu było polski język. Po polsku wszystko. Szkoła po rumuńsku, tak po drodze byli Niemcy, po niemiecku, a w domu po polsku było z mamką, a po niemiecku z tatką. Tak. A teraz wszystko po rumuńsku pani.

**Language at school**

*Did you go to a Romanian school?*

Po rumuńsku. Po rumuńsku. Nie było po polski, wszystko po rumuńsku.

*How long did you go to school? How many grades?*

No to tak było: siedem lat. Do siódmej, do siódmej klasy. A jak nie to się zrobiło cztery klasy, kielik sie mógł. Wszystko po rumuńsku. Tutaj było tylu Niemców, ale wszystko po rumuńsku. I we szkole wszystko po rumuńsku.

**Language of playing with children**

We szkole było po rumuńsku, ale tak między dziećmi tylko po niemiecku. Wszystko po niemiecku. Było ładnie. I Rumuni bawili się z Niemcami.

**Explication**

The speaker started learning Romanian at school. At home, she still spoke the Polish dialect of Bukovinian highlanders. She also used German in conversations with her father and immediate family, as well as with her German-speaking neighbours before they left for Germany.

**ADOLESCENCE 1945–1952, MARRIAGE 1946****Official language: Romanian****Language in marriage**

Na naj se nahadzem. W szterdziestym szóstym. Musim se nahadać w kierym roku sie wydała. I na Pleszy ja żyła rok! To nie było lachko. Jacy do góry, do pola. Boże!

**Language in the church**

W kościele było po polsku. Był ksiondz. Po polsku. Też po niemiecku. Ja, ale kolendowały po rumuńsku u Niemców. U Niemców po rumuńsku. Tak było. No tutaj było maj ta wioska była tylu Niemców. Poszły i Niemcy, i Polacy. Jeszcze som Polacy, eszcze som, ale už wszystko po rumuńsku. Chodziły po kolindzie i kolindowały po polsku koło okna i potem ich zaprosiły do domu. I to było bardzo ładnie. I teraz jeszcze idom.

**Language of the environment**

Tutaj wszystko było po polsku na Bukowcu tutaj. Teraz po rumuńsku. Tutaj, tutaj było wesele ładne i przyszli z Pleszy, i stond, i było, było. Śpiewali, tańczyły. Po polsku śpiewały. Wszystko śpiewały po polsku. Wszystko po polsku. Už zapomniała, ale ja wszystko wiedziała po polsku! Wszystko!

**Explication**

The speaker married a Polish man from Pleșa and they lived in a Polish-speaking environment for a year. Their home language was the Polish dialect of Bukovinian highlanders and the speaker's children use it to this day. Then the speaker moved with her husband to Păltinoasa, which had changed its ethnic composition: the German population had left for Germany and most of the Poles had left for Poland. At that time, Polish was the home language, but Romanian was used outside more and more often.

**ADULT LIFE 1953–1987****Official language: Romanian****Home language**

I moje syny już robiły wojsko. Wszystko. Ale rumuńskie. Po rumuńsku wszystko. Ja. I tata musiał w Rumunii. Ja była w Polsce.

**Language of prayer**

Po polsku modliły i siedziały i patrzyły, czy śpiewały. Jako koło umritego, no. A menżowie tam grały karty. Kobiety odprawiały wszystko po polsku co koło umritego, po polsku.

**Explication**

In adult life, the Romanian language more and more often supplanted Polish in the sphere of neighbourly communication due to the small number of Poles living in the village. However, Polish remained the language of prayer. In contrast, the German language disappeared from all spheres: fewer and fewer people in her surroundings spoke German, since the oldest German speakers died and others left for Germany. The interviewee mentioned that her two sisters had also left with their German husbands for Germany.

**RETIREMENT AND OLD AGE 1988–2019****Official language: Romanian****Home language** [About her daughter-in-law]

Nauczyła po polsku, a to wszystko po rumuńsku, pani! W domu mama, tato po rumuńsku wszystko. Nie, mnie sie to nie spodoba. Ja z niom nie mówię, jo do niej nie mówim po rumuńsku. Po polsku! I to nauczyła sie, a tak to nie znała, nie znała. Po rumuńsku. A ja po rumuńsku nie mogę. W domu, aby ja z dziećmi rozmawiała po rumuńsku? To nie! Po polsku!

**Nowadays**

To jedzynie: mliko, kartofle, fazula, masło, syr. I tak wyrosła sześć, sztyry wnuki.

**Language in the church**

Chodzą, ale po rumuńsku w kościele. Po rumuńsku. Downo było po niemiecku, bo tutaj byli Niemcy. Cała wioska Niemcy. Tu było wszystko po niemiecku. I ja wiedziała po niemiecku bardzo dobrze, ale już zapomniała. Już nie czuję, nie słyszę niemiecki jinyk. Ni ma, ni ma. A to, to było wszystko po nimiecku. I w kościele i tak.

**Memories contrasted with modern times**

No, ja była w Polsce, bo mam krewnych, co stonď wyjechały i ja była w Polsce z Pleszy, bo mój mēńz miał bardzo duŹo rodziny z Pleszy w Polsce. Plesza, Sołonec, Pojana. Uni pani tamtaje, wszystko te wioski. Ja i Plesze. Była pani na Pleszy? Tam ja Źyła rok. Mój mēńz był z Pleszy. I tam ja Źyła na Pleszy rok i potem przyszły my tutaj. No miały my troche pole, bo my kupowały. Jak sie ni miał pola i chudoby, BoŹe waruj! Nie miał ci co jeść! Było bardzo cińŹko. Po wojnie. Ach! Bardzo cińŹko było! I Bogu dziēnkujem!

No tera sytko po rumuńsku. Jak były Niemcy to było wszystko po nimiecku. Tutaj była cała wioska Niemcōw.[...] To było, jak jechały do Polskiej Polacy stonď. Jak przyszły tutaj na odwiedzynie, to nom opowiadały Polacy, co im mówiły na granicy, aby sie wracały nazadek, bo tu sie zostawiły Cygany. Bo Niemcy. Bo tutaj było bardzo duŹo Niemcōw. No. Nimcy poszły. Aby nie Hitler moŹe i dzisiaj by były Nimcy tutaj. Były dobre gospodarzy, mieli pole i bardzo duŹo pola sie zostawiło, chałupy, ogrody. Bardzo duŹo. Było bardzo duŹo Niemcōw tu. Bardzo dobry pracowały. Pole i wszystko. A w Niemcach już nie pracujom pole tak. Ja była i w Niemcach. Mnie sie nie spodobało w Niemcach. Jacy jedzynie i poriundeck, i spacyr po drodze. Mnie sie to nie spodobało. Ja nie chciała. Moja siostra chciała, aby ja sie zostawiła w Niemcach, bo dwie siostry były w Niemcach. Nie. Mnie sie nie spodobało w Niemcach. Pole sie nie pracowało. Nic. Chudoby nic. Nie.

TeŹ! Eszcze, eszcze už zapomniała, ale eszcze sie rozmówim i z Niemcami i z Polokami i z Rumunami. Aszcze Bōg zapłać Bogu. Eszcze sie rozmówim i z Niemcami. Jak tutaj były Niemcy, do szkoły było, dzieci sycko po nimiecku. Ja sie nauczyła po nimiecku mówić, bo tak było. Było Niemcy. Tutaj były bardzo duŹo Niemcōw. Jo po Niemcach, jech znała dobrze po niemiecku. Już teraz zapomina, bo od roku szterdziestym już ni ma po nimiecku.

*Are you able to say anything in German?*

Jech wiedziała, ale užech zapomina. To było fazula była fizol, ziemnioki — kartofyl. Wszystko zapominam už. Dziewiēdziesionť rokōw. A! Pani.

Polacy, už po rumuńsku, wszystko po rumuńsku. Mnie sie to nie spodoba. Jako je? A szcze z Niemcami sie rozmówim, z Polokami sie rozmówim.

**Explication**

The speaker compares old times to modern times. In the sphere of home communication things have changed: Romanian has replaced Polish, since she has a Romanian daughter-in-law. The son and daughter-in-law who live with the speaker speak Romanian to their children. The speaker has

not used German for a long time; when she was asked to say something in German, she admitted that she no longer remembered it and she had no one to speak in that language to. Romanian has also become the language of liturgy.

LB was bilingual as a child: both Polish and German were always present in her family home. She inherited Polish from her mother. The Polish language of the speaker has the characteristics of the subdialect of Bukovinian highlanders, which was discussed in the book *Świadectwo zanikającego dziedzictwa. Mowa polska na Bukowinie: Rumunia–Ukraina* [A Testimony to a Vanishing Heritage. The Polish Language of Bukovina: Romania–Ukraine] (Krasowska et al., 2018, pp. 84–96). Her mother came from the village of Solonețu Nou, where all the inhabitants spoke in the subdialect of Bukovinian highlanders. The interviewee also spoke it after getting married, as her husband was from Pleșa, where it was in common use.

The subdialect of Bukovinian highlanders has loan words from Romanian, which can be noticed in the speaker's statements, e.g. *Eszcze Bogu dzienkujem, eszcze nicht mi nie da ani tarunek jedzenia*, cf. Rom. *țară* 'wiejski' (adj. village, country) with *-ek*, meaning country food. In the next sentence: *I Rumuny banowały za Nimcami*, cf. Rom. *a bănuî* 'żałować za kimś' (to miss someone) is used both in Polish and Ukrainian dialects in Bukovina. Describing how she was dressed on her wedding day, the speaker uses the lexeme *koronice*, e.g. *W sukienke, welon, koronice tutaj. Welon biały i te koronice takie*, cf. Rom. *coronița* 'korona' (crown). In another sentence: *A teraz Żydów už ni ma. Už ni ma to co było, pani. Gata*, the speaker uses the Romanian word *gata*, which most accurately describes a situation that is 'the end': there are no more Germans in the village, cf. Rom. *gałą* 'gotowe, koniec' (end, done, over). *A tato miał serwiciu służbę*, from Rom. *serviciu* 'służba' (service). The speaker also uses words which are known in other subdialects of Bukovina, cf. *zrychtować* 'przygotować' (to get ready): *I była taka kobieta, co cie zrychtowała do ślubu*, from Ukr. *selo* 'wieś' (village): *Całe selo tam taj, było całe to Nimcy były*.

The utterances of this multilingual speaker (born in 1927) indicate that she has preserved a good command of spoken dialectal Polish. Although her first languages were Polish and German, she no longer remembers or uses the latter: she has forgotten it due to a lack of communication opportunities. Her narrative does not feature code switching: she uses only single words in Romanian. The speaker does not like the fact that Poles of the younger generation speak Romanian. This mainly applies to her sons and daughters, whose home language is Romanian. The Polish subdialect inherited from her mother distinguishes her from other ethnic communities living in Bukovina and is the main element of her Polish identity.

### 3.3 The language biography of KO

KO was born in 1927 in Zastavna, then in Romania. She spoke Polish at home with her parents. At school she first learned Romanian, then Ukrainian (mainly at work). The speaker got married to a Pole (1947), and Polish has always been their home language. To this day, she only speaks Polish at home with her daughter. The language of her private prayer is Polish. She has a great sense of Polish identity, of which language is the most important element.

#### CHILDHOOD 1927–1933

##### Official language: Romanian

##### Home language

Tak, u nas wszystko po polsku, my tylko w domu po polsku rozmawiali. Później my sobie wypisali gazety po polski, można było przez pocztę wypisywać. A tak u nas była przy kościele biblioteka, to my sobie brali ksionżki, coś troszki czytali. A teraz już nie, bo takie lata podeszli i w okularach nie widać nitki.

**Language of the place / language of the neighbourly community**

Przed wojną tu było dużo Polaków i z Polakami rozmawiali my po polsku, no a z Ukraińcami po ukraińsku.

**Polish life before the war**

I tam tańcy byli, i tam krakowiaka tańczyli, i co jeszcze, krakowiak taniec, i jeszcze co. A nie to rumuński — „hory mary”. Ja wiem, że nawet ja w cerkwi śpiewałam po rumuńsku na chórach był nauczyciel tam, ja tam śpiewałam brali nas do cerkwi, ja tam śpiewałam. Ale to jeszcze, kiedy ja była taka, a teraz już taka.

**Language of prayer**

Tak zbieraliśmy w niedzielę czy w jakieś święta, nu i do kogoś, to do nas czasem, to do Szydłowska, kuzenka była, to do Burdysz jeszcze wyżej.

**Explication**

KO was born to a Polish family in Zastavna; the home language of her mother and father, as well as of her grandparents, was Polish. Her ancestors came from Poland; they moved to Zastavna for economic reasons, as did other families who settled in Bukovina in the early nineteenth century. As a child, the speaker spoke Polish and, as she recalls, went to sing in Romanian in the Orthodox church. It is worth noting that Romanian was the official language in her childhood. Before the war, the Polish cultural movement was teeming with life: Zastavna had a *Dom Polski* (Polish House) and *Czytelnia Polska* (Polish Reading Room). The priest taught religion in Polish. The interviewee spoke Ukrainian to her Ukrainian neighbours and Polish to the Polish ones.

**SCHOOL AGE 1934–1946**

**Official language:** Romanian, Russian

**Home language:** Polish

**School language**

Ja kiedy chodziłam [do szkoły], miałam siedem lat, poszłam i wczyłam się do trzydziestego dwunastego roku w Rumunii, tam po rumuńsku, później czterdziestego roku byli Sowiety i ja poszłam dalej do piątej klasy na ruski. Tak wczyłam się do czterdziestego siódmego roku, a później trzeba było jeszcze chodzić, jak ja poszłam do pracy. Wtedy trzeba było dziesięć klasy, a ja miałam siedem klasy, to ja jeszcze wieczorem chodziłam.

*Did you learn Romanian, Ukrainian and Russian at school?*

Uczyli ukraińskiego, a rumuński, to tylko tam przed wojną. Pjeńć klasów rumuńskich, bo później już nie było. A z pracy posyłali do Kijowa, jak to się mówi, na kwalifikację, na powyszenie kwalifikacji. No to to nie tak jak szkoła, ja wiecej, już nie uczyłam się. To tylko tak dziesięć klasy. A polski uczyłam, tylko nas ksiondz uczył religii.

**Language of religion**

Ja już powiem; ja chodziłam do kościoła, ksiondz nas uczył religii po polsku. Ksiondz Nawak. Eugeniusz Nawak. On był u nas w Zastawnie też z Polski, ja nie wiem skond.

**Explication**

KO went to school and studied Romanian for five years. She finished her education in Russian and Ukrainian, which had become official languages as a result of social and political changes. Polish was the language of the family and neighbourly contacts, as well as the language of religion and private prayers. After the Second World War, the number of Polish speakers in Zastavna decreased as most of them left for Poland.

**EDUCATION AND WORK 1946–1953, MARRIAGE (1947) AND FURTHER YEARS OF WORK****Official language: Russian, Ukrainian****Home language: Polish (marriage 1947)**

A my pożenili się. Ślub był u nas w Zastawnie, brali ślub w naszym kościele, ostanni, wiencej już nikt nie brał ślub w kościele. Wtedy ślub był zabroniony. To był tysionc dziewięćset czterdziesty siódmy rok. Dziewiontego lipca. A mnie ślub dał ksiondz Andrzejewski.

*Did he write in Polish?*

Po polsku, a on wiedział. On z dwudziestego trzeciego roku był, on wiencej chodził do religii, jag ja. Mamy dokumenty takie, że on miał prawo po wojnie mieć tam. I pole dawali i pomieszkanie.

**Language of the environment**

Po wojnie było ciężko, trzeba pracować było i tak my pracowali. Nu przyszedł już ruski jazyk, nu ruski, to znajetie ruski takoj i ukraiński tutaj w Zastawnie. Jak pojechało sie gdzieś do russkij nado znać, a tutaj na miejscu to po ukraińsku wszędzie.

**ADULT LIFE 1954–1987****Official language: Russian, Ukrainian****Home language: Polish****Language of studies and environment**

Spoczontku ja pracowałam w fin otdele, w finansach, później jak poszłam po pensiji, to ja tam dwadzieścia lat pracowałam, a później dwadzieścia dwa lata w aptece. A teraz już w domu pracuję. No to już było po rusku potem i ukraiński.

**Explication**

After the war, KO's adult life revolved around Russian and Ukrainian. She worked in a finance department and then in a pharmacy, so she had to use clients' languages and the languages that were in official use. She spoke Polish to her husband and daughter at home. Her husband also worked in a Ukrainian-speaking environment. In the 1970s they spent over a month in Poland, where they spoke Polish. After the war, Polish life in Zastavna changed. The Catholic church was closed; the Polish House and the Polish Reading Room were closed and ruined. Poles, especially those who attended church, were under surveillance and were threatened. At home, they spoke Polish only quietly to each other; they spoke loudly in Ukrainian, especially in the presence of neighbours.

**RETIREMENT AND OLD AGE 1988–2019****Official language: Russian, Ukrainian****Reading**

A tak ni: ksionżki my też, tak troszczke i z Polskiej sobie przywiezłam i tak.

**Language of the church, religion, private prayer. Language of the environment**

*And how do you communicate with the neighbours? In Ukrainian, or have the others learned a bit of Polish?*

Nie, nie, wszystko po ukraińsku. To nawet kiedy Ruskie Sowiety byli, to i wtedy mówiło się — Dobryj deń.

*So not even in Russian.*

Nie, nie. Ta kto tam rosyjski znał. To kto był Ruski, to mówił — Zdrawstwujtie. Wszystko po ukraińsku. Kiedy tu u nas była, ona była z Uralu, ruska taka, to ona zmarła i nie mogła rozmawiać po ukraińsku.

*And can you still hear any Romanian in the streets of Zastavna?*

To tak chyba jakieś słowa, a ja już czegoś zapomniała ta j tako rozumie, kto co mówi, a żeby już rozmawiać, to nie.

### Explication

The 1990s brought about a huge change in the daily life of KO. She still speaks Polish at home with her daughter, but she says that sometimes she can say and express her thoughts faster in Ukrainian. She can no longer remember Romanian, which she learned at school, as she has no one to talk to. Polish became the language of prayer. Polish also occurs in names related to annual rituals: the speaker notes that Ukrainians make *kutia* for Christmas, and Poles make *pszeniczka*.

KO inherited the Polish language, i.e. Bukovinian Polish, from her parents and grandparents. She uses it to this day. She speaks Polish only when communicating with her daughter; she prays in Polish and reads religious literature in Polish too. She learned Romanian at school for five years, but she does not remember much of it today: she says that she cannot speak Romanian, although she understands it. After World War II, Russian and Ukrainian were the official languages in the country. The speaker acquired her qualifications in Kyiv in Russian, and the most commonly used language at work was Ukrainian, which prevailed in all spheres, especially after the speaker turned sixty.

The Polish spoken by this informant belongs to Bukovinian Polish, which is a continuation of the Polish of south-eastern Kresy and has all the phonetic and inflectional features of this variety.

In her utterances Ukrainian loan words can be observed, e.g. the sentence: *Ja już po menżu bendę pisała się* displays a transfer of patterns from Ukrainian to a Polish utterance: Ukrainians say *po cholovikovi pyshusia* (I use my married name). In the sentence *Wiem tylko, że do czytalni my chodzili*, the word *czytalia* was pronounced in Ukrainian with a Ukrainian accent to mean ‘czytelnia’ (reading room). Interlingual transfer can also be observed in the sentence *Teraz już tym korzysta się*, which means ‘it is now used’, from Ukr. *korystuvatysia tym* (to use, utilise sth). Ukrainian is also visible in the following sentence: *Jeszcze jak my przyjechali odnogo razu, to jeszcze my zajszli w te kazarmy, co on służył, gdzie on spał*, cf. Ukr. *odnoho razu* ‘jednego razu’ (once, one day); *zayty v ti kazarmy* ‘wejść do tych koszar’ (to enter the barracks). Ukrainian words used in Polish statements are as follows: *wczytałem się* ‘uczyłem się’, Ukr. *vchylasia* (I learned, studied); *po pensji* ‘na emeryturze’, Ukr. *na pensii* (on retirement); *ostanni* ‘ostatni’ Ukr. *ostannii* (last, last one). The transfer of patterns is caused by the similarity of the Polish and Ukrainian language systems, which the speaker has used for over a quarter of a century in her environment. Additionally, after 1990, Ukrainian gained prestige and became the sole official language of the state.

The speaker also borrows Russian vocabulary when talking about work or a situation in which Russian had a higher prestige. In the sentence *Dwa zbili, jak to się mówili, nawodczykom, jak to powiedzieć* the speaker uses the lexeme *nawodczik* as she does not know the Polish equivalent, Rus. *navodchik* ‘strzelec’ (shooter, rifleman). In the sentence *I oni zbili ten samolot, i on za tę nagrody dostał srebrny chrzest*, the speaker uses the Russian word *nagrody* to mean ‘odznaczenie’ (badge, medal). When talking about work she uses phrases that were used at the time: *Spoczontku ja pracowałam w fin otdele, w finansach, później jak poszłam po pensji, to ja tam dwadzieścia lat pracowałam, a później dwadzieścia dwa lata w aptece. Fin otdiel* ‘odział finansowy’, Rus. *finansovyi otdel* (financial department). Likewise, in the next sentence: *A z pracy posyłali do Kijowa, jak to się mówi, na kwalifikację, na powyszenie kwalifikacji*, Rus. *povyshenie kvalifikatsii* (advanced training). Russian-derived words can be found in other sentences, such as *spirtowa*, cf. Rus. *spirtovaiia* (alcoholic); and *skuczno* ‘tęskno’ Rus. *skuchno* (longing; boring).

The language biography of the speaker developed in a multilingual environment, where the dominant languages were Polish and Ukrainian. The close relationship of these languages en-

couraged the borrowing of Ukrainian or Russian words into Polish. There are also examples of the use of Ukrainian syntactic patterns and patterns for combining words, which are very similar in Ukrainian and Polish, the two languages used by the informant on a daily basis.

## 4 Conclusions

The linguistic and social development of an individual are interrelated. It is possible to observe turning points or periods in the psychological and social development of an individual: they determine the shape of his/her identity and language behaviour (Głuszkowski, 2011, p. 125). It is worth identifying the common social factors that influenced the multilingualism of the speakers discussed here. The main factors are the historical and political conditions that influenced their language experience. It should be mentioned that the official languages in this area changed: before 1918 it was German, in 1918–1940 — Romanian, in 1941–1945 — Romanian and Russian (in the northern part of Bukovina), in 1945–1990 — Russian and Ukrainian (in the northern part), in 1991–2010 — Ukrainian.

The speakers, born in 1925 (LN) and 1927 (KO and LB) in Romania, have diverse language biographies. Let us start with the immediate environment, i.e. the families in which they were born and the language they began to speak when Romanian was the official language. In all three cases, their home language was a subdialect of Polish; for LB German was a home language alongside Polish, as she was born to a bilingual Polish-German family. The speakers did not know Romanian before they began to learn it at primary school. In the case of LN, Polish was taught for a limited number of hours; KO learned it only in religion classes; LB did not have Polish at school at all. After 1945, LN and KO found themselves in another country (Soviet Ukraine instead of Romania) even though they did not change their place of residence. They continued their education in Russian and Ukrainian, the official languages of their new country.

The language biography of each of the speakers carries an extraordinary cognitive value, bringing in further interesting facts. Namely, that choosing a life partner also involves using a particular language at home. LN started using Ukrainian at home when she got married; KO married a Pole, so her language of communication at home remained Polish, similarly to LB, who lived in Romania and also married a Pole, and her children's home language was a subdialect of Polish. Their language situations were also complex in their adult lives. LN and KO used official languages, i.e. Russian and Ukrainian, while LB used mostly Romanian. As it is today, the situation of the speakers is as follows: LN and KO usually communicate in Ukrainian, and LB — in Romanian; the language situation has also changed in the home sphere: LN usually speaks Ukrainian, and LB speaks Romanian as she lives with the younger generation who are in mixed marriages. There have also been significant changes in the language of prayer: LN switched from Polish to Romanian, she listens to Mass on the radio and prays more and more often in Romanian and Ukrainian; KO attends Mass in Ukrainian, but the language of her private prayer is Polish; LB uses Romanian more and more often in prayers next to Polish. Over the past ninety years, the speakers' language repertoire has been enriched by new languages, and the role of Polish has diminished to only limited contacts in the home environment.

In all three cases the acquisition of further languages has been closely related to political and historical events and the experiences of each life period: school education, the surrounding environment, the choice of a life partner, and communication today with children, grandchildren, and other immediate family. The table below presents the acquisition of languages in various periods of life of the informants; it also includes information on the official language(s) as an important element of political and historical life affecting the place of residence (see Table 1, p. 17).

As can be seen from the above accounts, it is difficult to preserve the linguistic and cultural identity of the individual in mixed-language marriages. For Bukovinian Poles, the Polish language and the Roman Catholic religion are factors of identification and indigenous values symbolizing



Table 1: The acquisition of languages by speakers born in 1925 and 1927 in different periods of their lives

	LN, born in 1925	KO, born in 1927	LB, born in 1927
official	Romanian		
prayer	Polish		
childhood	Polish	Polish	Polish and German
school age	Romanian, Polish	Romanian, Ukrainian	Romanian
official	Russian, Ukrainian		Romanian
further education / work	Russian, Ukrainian	Russian, Ukrainian	Romanian
marriage	Ukrainian	Polish	Polish
adult life	Russian, Ukrainian, Polish	Russian, Ukrainian, Polish	Polish, Romanian
today	Ukrainian, Polish	Ukrainian, Polish	Romanian, Polish
language of church	Romanian, Ukrainian, Polish	Ukrainian, Polish	Romanian, Polish

their belonging to the culture of their ancestors. These two elements are at the core of their identity and are fundamental cultural values that are passed on to children.

All the language biographies presented here show the speakers' multilingualism and the way and time in which they learned subsequent languages. Their acquisition was voluntary on the one hand, but imposed on the other. Functionally, the first languages were the official languages: Ukrainian and Russian for LN and KO, and Romanian for LB, acquired due to the change of the language of public administration and school education. LB spoke German as a first language along with Polish but she has forgotten it. KO learned Romanian but she does not speak it today. All three speakers are multilingual to this day; they use particular languages in particular situations, depending on the interlocutor and the setting. Knowledge of different languages also helps them to fill gaps in one code with words and phrases from another. The above examples show the processes of becoming a multilingual person during the life of an individual. They were influenced by microstructural and macrostructural factors: the historical and social situation of the region, place of birth, the place and possibilities of school education, the choice of a life partner, sending their own children to schools, and religious factors pertaining to membership of the Roman Catholic Church, such as the language of private prayer.

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